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#### USGS Releases Study Describing Climate Change Impacts for the Bay-Delta

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) recently published the results of a study that examined the impacts of climate change on the California Bay-Delta region. The results were published by the journal PLoS ONE in September 2011, in an article titled "Projected Evolution of California's San Francisco Bay-Delta-River System in a Century of Climate Change."

The findings showed that in the next century the Bay-Delta will experience changes to its habitats, sea level, and freshwater availability. USGS experts used both fast and moderate change scenarios in the study and found that variables such as water temperature and salinity levels may adversely affect species already under scrutiny, including the Delta smelt and Chinook salmon.

Other highlighted results include:

- The need for more strategies to deal with the possibility of longer dry seasons, caused by loss of seasonal snowpack and the earlier melting of snow.
- The need for more strategies to plan for the possibility of more winter flooding, due to earlier snowmelt and a shift in precipitation from snow to rain.

At the release of the results, USGS Director Marcia McNutt said in a statement that "the protection of California's Bay-Delta system will continue to be a top priority for maintaining the state's agricultural economy, water security to tens of millions of users, and essential habitat to a valuable ecosystem ... this new USGS research complements ongoing initiatives to conserve the Bay-Delta by providing sound scientific understanding for managing this valuable system such that it continues to provide the services we need in the face of climate uncertainty."

The report's findings are expected to be used by the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and will likely also support the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan.

The full study results, as published in the journal PLoS ONE, can be found at:  
<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0024465> .

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